

*re-scheduled to 3/26/09*

Judiciary Committee

House Bill 6532: *An Act Concerning the Statute of Limitations for Bringing an Action for Damages for the Sexual Assault of a Minor*

Submitted by Stacy Rogers

March 20, 2009

Honorable Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee:

My name is Stacy Rogers. I am a resident of Bristol, Connecticut, and a student at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work. I am here today to testify regarding House Bill 6532, An Act Concerning the Statute of Limitations for Bringing an Action for Damages for the Sexual Assault of a Minor. This bill would allow an additional three years after the discovery of new evidence pertinent to the case in which an individual may bring an action to recover damages that had resulted from childhood sexual abuse. I am in favor of this bill and hope that you will support it.

I work extensively with children and families who have experienced child sexual abuse - in my work as a direct care counselor at a Safe Home in Plainville and in my internship at the Aetna Foundation Children's Center here in Hartford. In my experience, children who have experienced sexual abuse oftentimes have parents or other relatives who experienced similar abuse in their childhood. The available literature supports this trend. A study published in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence in 2000, for example, found that a significant risk factor of child sexual abuse was having a parent with a prior history of sexual abuse (McCloskey & Bailey, 2000).

At the Children's Center, the mental health staff have begun a program to address child sexual abuse across generations in families. This need was identified several years ago when the Center's staff found that many children who were coming to them for treatment had caregivers and family members who also had a history of sexual abuse in their childhood. Oftentimes, this was the first time these individuals had disclosed the abuse that they had been subjected to; they may have intentionally or unintentionally pushed the memories of abuse aside in order to cope and live their lives. The trauma that comes with experiencing this form of abuse can persist for years. These survivors who have finally found the strength and courage to disclose their abuse history deserve justice, no matter how long it has been since the abuse happened.

House Bill 6532 would allow adult survivors of child sexual abuse more opportunity to pursue that justice. Any measure that would allow the pursuit of justice for these individuals would help to mediate the trauma they have experienced and to promote the healing process. It is for this reason that I am in favor of this bill and ask that you support it as well.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you regarding this extremely important bill. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Stacy Rogers

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